

## **National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans**

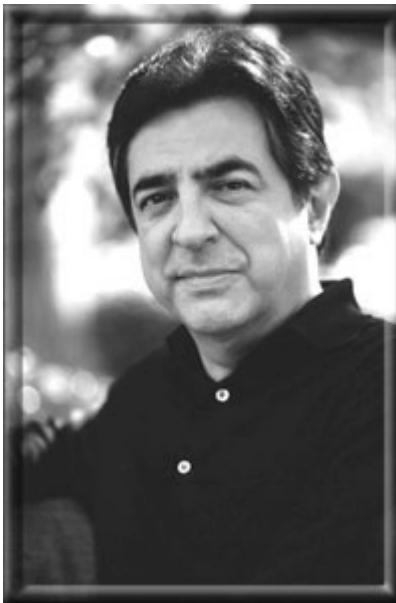
(traditionally held during Valentines' Day week)

The purpose of the National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Program is to:

- pay tribute and express appreciation to hospitalized veterans;
- increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center, and
- encourage citizens to visit hospitalized veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

Each year the week of February 14 is an opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, more than 98,000 veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for every day in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes.

Joe Mantegna  
Chairperson, 2004 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans



Versatile character actor Joe Mantegna has been appointed chairman of the Department of Veterans Affairs 2004 National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

During the National Salute, VA invites individuals, veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities at the VA medical centers. The activities and events include special ward visits and valentine distributions; photo opportunities; school essay contests; special recreation activities and veteran recognition programs.

The week also provides an opportunity for the community to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within the medical center.